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SPECIFIC GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS: MINORITIES

Written statement submitted by the Caucasians United for
Reparations and Emancipation (CURE/AFRE), a non-governmental
organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement,
which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council
resolution 1996/31.

[11 January 1999]

Written statement on behalf of African-Americans

1. Silis Muhammad is the spiritual son of the Honourable Elijah Muhammad. But for him, we so-called African-Americans would not have the courage to make the following statement to the Commission on Human Rights. We thank him for the great good he did for us, and perchance too for humanity.
2. Our question is whether we, the so-called African-Americans in the United States of America, are in possession of our human rights.
3. Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which the United States of America has ratified, states, "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language."
4. We, the so-called African-Americans, were taken away from the culture of our origin. The slave ship took us from our place of beginning. The slave master did not return us to our culture, nor did he bring our culture and teach it to us. Nor has the Government of the United States of America, to date, sought to teach us our culture, or return us to it. We are absent the knowledge of our cultural beginning.
5. The slave ship took us away from our ancestral religious belief. We were dislodged from the knowledge of our lineage to Allah, God. The slave master taught us of his religion ultimately, and of his lineage to a supreme being whom he refers to by the name of God. The federal or local governments of America did not teach nor make provisions for us, the so-called African-Americans, or slaves, to learn the knowledge of our transmissible religious belief. We are absent the knowledge of our ancestral tradition of religion.
6. Regarding our original language, there were not any provisions set in motion by the local and federal governments of America for us to cultivate and continue speaking our language. To the contrary, provisions were set in motion to prevent us from speaking our language, originally. We were intentionally separated from one another, with total disregard, during slavery such that we would not be able to speak our language. Ultimately, we lost the knowledge of it.
7. Thus, to the extent that we were deprived of our culture, our religion and our language, we are not in possession of our human rights. Moreover, to the extent that we, especially during the period of chattel slavery, were constrained by the laws, the culture, the religion and the language of the Anglo-American, we lived, and to this day live, under a tyrannical government. By the acts of forced assimilation the Anglo-Americans have sought also to subsume us, the African-Americans, into its Constitution.
8. The desires, the perpetual existence and the human rights of African-Americans are not embodied in the majority Constitution, which, from its origin, is absent any input from us. The laws arising from America's majority Constitution do not embody the living will of the African-Americans.

9. Thus, we feel we cannot intelligently argue the issue of violation of our human rights. While we are human, we have not been in possession of our human rights for the past 433 years. Our human rights were wilfully destroyed, utterly. They were destroyed by the slave masters, under the auspices of the United States central and local governments, during our long sojourn as slaves in America.

10. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that recognition of the inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Here, at the beginning of the histories of the so-called African-Americans, the enslaved Africans brought to America were defined in the same terms as the "cattle" belonging to the Anglo-American rulers. Thus, our rights were those of their "cattle"; ours were not human rights. Yet we were then - and are, still, members of the human family.

11. Our inalienable rights were distorted so completely that we are damaged goods, still. We are lost from our original inherent culture, religion and language. America cannot lawfully force us to accept the choices which it deems to be our inalienable rights; nor can it force us and our progeny to abandon the hope for the reclamation of our own. One hundred and thirty four years of forced assimilation have not abrogated the desire to know, and to be ourselves. Today, we have no permanent national recognition, as a result of slavery. We have been identified as slaves, Niggers, Negroes, Coloureds, Black Americans, and today we are so-called African-Americans.

12. Thus, we are to this day a revolving nation, suspended within a nation, rent from our roots as a result of slavery and its lingering effects. We are detached, still, from our inalienable rights. To this extent, the very foundation upon which freedom, justice and peace among nations is established is for us non-existent: our inalienable rights are extinct! And this poses a threat to peace for the United States of America, for the Americas, and potentially for Europe. Why? It is a threat because of the despair of the many, which will endlessly be ignited to loathing and/or rioting if this abnormal situation is not reversed by the few humanitarians who aim, lawfully and by sanctions, to efficaciously stamp out violations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As in the contemporary case of Iraq, the United Nations, urged by the United States, sent inspectors to Iraq so as to avert what America believes to be a threat to humanity.

13. The United States of America, for the past 50 years, has violated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. During the past 50 years, America has not seen fit to restore us to our inalienable rights, or them to us; nor has it seen fit to grant to us the choice to be, or not to be Americans. Therefore, this statement is a request for United Nations assistance in the establishment of a forum (perhaps under the auspices of the Sub-Commission). The type of forum requested is similar to the one proposed for indigenous peoples. We wish the United Nations to establish a forum within the boundaries of the United States, preferably at United Nations Headquarters.

14. The Government of the United States ordained slavery and forced assimilation upon captive Africans for more than 400 years. The United States Government wishes to persuade the United Nations and the world today that

African-Americans are full and equal members of America's society, enjoying inalienable rights. Its propaganda is so persuasive and effective that even some of us believe that the self-determination of the Anglo-American is our very own.

15. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, "disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind ..." America's disregard and contempt for human rights ought to be recognized by the United Nations as America has dispossessed us of our culture, religion and language and has forced assimilation upon us. Indeed it is barbarous, and it denies us the full enjoyment of freedom, justice and equality. "Whereas," according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law." We therefore appeal to the persuasive powers as well as the rule of law of the United Nations and its Member States to come to our aid.

16. African-Americans have looked toward and exhausted all remedies made available by the majority Government, although, it is viewed as the oppressor. In light of the aforementioned, cannot the United Nations open a forum for African-Americans in its host country? We wish to address the question of whether we choose to reclaim or recapture our original culture, language, religion and identity, or whether we choose to assimilate into the majority culture of America. Upon this matter we have never enjoyed the freedom of choice. We petition the Commission on Human Rights for the right to make our choice within the protection of a United Nations forum. We want recognition of our choice of human rights. We want recognition of our choice of inalienable rights. We want the crime of plantation slavery and its lingering effects which was, and is still, a crime against us and against humanity, to be rectified. We believe that through a forum we can assist the United Nations in fulfilling its most noble covenant, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which envisages human rights "for everyone, everywhere"; at present, we are left out.

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